



Disaster and Emergency Management Resources

Damage to Flooded Structures

- Look for wood structural members that are cracked. If doors or windows do not open as they did before the storm, this may indicate that the structure has shifted. In case of severe shifting, water lines, gas lines, and electrical circuits may have been damaged.
- If wetness occurred because of flood or leaking roofs, look for wet electrical circuits, wet insulation, and other water damage to the interior of the structure. Once insulation becomes wet in a wall or attic, it must be replaced. Wall insulation that is sealed within the structure will not dry out.
- Structures that use a roof truss system should be carefully inspected. In many cases, truss systems are constructed of 2 X 4s and metal fasteners. Any crack or break in the truss will greatly affect the strength of the truss system.
- The roof is a very good indicator of the presence of structural damage. Look at the ridge of the roof, and assess whether it is straight. This can be viewed from a distance better than close up. If the ridge sags either on the end or in the middle, the load-bearing walls have shifted.
- Check the walls to verify that they are vertical and straight. This normally can be done by eye or with a carpenter's level.
- Check where the structure meets the foundation. If the house is on piers, look at the individual piers and see that they remain in place and level. Whether it is on a slab or on piers, check to see that the building has not shifted on its foundation. Flooded wooden floors, if they do not buckle, will sometimes push walls outward at the base.
- Check for cracks in masonry exteriors of the building. Look near the corners of the structures and under and around doors and windows of the facility for masonry cracks.
- If any of these indicators of structural damage are observed, call a building contractor, architect or engineer. A professional needs to assess the building for its safety and determine the required repairs.

Adapted from resource material developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service entitled "Louisiana Floods," and the Texas Cooperative Extension Service entitled "The Handbook for Emergency Preparation and Response"